

# *Protecting America's Children*



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*Operation Predator*



**Homeland  
Security**

## Office of the Press Secretary

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### **“OPERATION PREDATOR”**

#### ***ICE Initiative Targeting Child Predators***

ICE has arrested approximately 1,300 child predators and sex offenders since the July 9, 2003, launch of “Operation Predator,” a comprehensive Department of Homeland Security (DHS) initiative to protect children worldwide.

Working with its counterparts in DHS along with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Department of Justice, ICE has made arrests in almost every state and major city in the nation. Internationally, by coordinating with ICE overseas Attaché offices and foreign law enforcement agencies, Operation Predator has also netted targets in around the globe. As the Administration and DHS increases the focus on the international sex tourism industry, international arrests will continue to increase. Both U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens have been arrested, prosecuted, and/or sentenced under Operation Predator, including the following:

- Non-citizen child sex offenders whose crimes made them subject to deportation
- U.S. residents who traveled abroad to engage in sex with minors
- Individuals who molested mentally-impaired minors
- Individuals who used the Internet to lure minors to engage in sex with them
- Individuals who smuggled foreign minors into this country to work as prostitutes
- Individuals who manufactured or distributed child pornography via the Internet

“As President Bush said recently before the United Nations, there is a new humanitarian crisis spreading across the globe: that of human smuggling and trafficking. More and more children, boys and girls not even old enough to read, are falling victim to the increasingly organized and profitable trade of human trafficking. In our own country, certain individuals pay significant sums of money to travel to other countries and engage in prostitution with children,” said Garcia. “Through Operation Predator, and the PROTECT Act just passed by Congress and signed by the President, the Department of Homeland Security is working around the clock to identify and remove these people not only from American streets, but also to hold them accountable wherever they commit these heinous crimes.”

To achieve its objectives, Operation Predator employs a three-pronged strategy of identifying child predators, investigating these individuals, and removing them from our streets. Coordinated nationally and internationally by the ICE Cyber Crimes Center in Virginia, Operation Predator brings together the many ICE disciplines and field offices in a united operation against those who prey on children.

Operation Predator also relies upon an unprecedented partnership between ICE and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). ICE has devoted two special agents to work full-time at NCMEC to process tips received on the NCMEC hotline / Internet site and to send actionable leads to ICE field offices for investigation.

Aside from the arrests, Operation Predator has reached several other milestones since its July 9, 2003 launch.

- 1) Since July 9, ICE has developed an enhanced investigative and public outreach campaign to combat international child sex tourism. The investigative aspect of the campaign is using provisions of the recently enacted PROTECT Act of 2003 to better target U.S. residents traveling abroad to engage in sex with minors, as well as those serving as child sex tour operators. In the first case in the nation to use the new law, prosecutors in Seattle this week filed child sex tourism charges against a man arrested by ICE upon his return from Cambodia. According to the criminal complaint, this individual has admitted molesting as many as **50** children. In another ICE case (involving the old child sex tourism law), a former school pediatrician is on trial this week in New York City on charges of traveling to Mexico to engage in sex with minors at a beachside resort that catered to pedophiles. ICE is also preparing to launch a public awareness campaign involving pamphlets and videos to inform the public about child sex tourism, which is estimated by non-profit groups to victimize **2 million** children worldwide.
- 2) Since July 9, the National Child Victim Identification Program (NCVIP), which is housed at the ICE Cyber Crimes Center, has positively identified children featured in **256** digital child pornography images at the request of other law enforcement agencies. ICE has provided this data to the requesting law enforcement agency to help them rescue children in the images or to assist in prosecutions. Developed jointly with NCMEC, the Justice Department, FBI, Secret Service and other agencies, NCVIP is the nation's only comprehensive, searchable system for identifying digital child pornography images. It is designed to help law enforcement worldwide identify and rescue those children featured in the images. NCVIP is also designed to facilitate the prosecution of those who possess or distribute digital child pornography. With assistance from other agencies, NCVIP will eventually contain all known child pornography images on the Internet.
- 3) Since July 9, ICE has obtained from the National Criminal Information Center (NCIC) Sex Offender Registry a consolidated list of registered sex offenders from all 50 U.S. states, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This list, which contained approximately **304,000** names, was vetted through ICE's immigration databases, resulting in more than **474** action leads that have been disseminated to ICE field offices. These leads involve foreign nationals who have been convicted of sex offenses in the U.S. and may be subject to deportation as a result of their crimes. ICE is actively targeting these individuals for arrest.
- 4) Since July 9, the ICE Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC) in Vermont has fielded more than **141** calls on a toll-free hotline (**1-866-DHS-2ICE**) that was created as part of Operation Predator. The hotline allows the public to report information about child sex

offenders and others preying on children. The LESC has forwarded leads to ICE field offices and other law enforcement agencies across the nation. One of these tips led to the arrest of a Kenyan national accused of raping a **14**-year-old girl near Boston.

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**Operation Predator**

*Operation Predator* is a new initiative developed by the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to protect children world-wide. As the President has made clear anyone who harms a child will be a priority target of law enforcement in this Administration. This comprehensive DHS program will identify child predators and remove them from the United States (if subject to deportation). *Operation Predator* will also work to identify children depicted in child pornography to help rescue them, and to assist in prosecuting the people responsible for making and distributing the pornographic material.

This Homeland Security initiative is being driven by ICE's CyberSmuggling Center in conjunction with every facet of the ICE organization. In addition, ICE will partner with other important law enforcement entities such as DHS's own U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the FBI, and other state and local law enforcement agencies. This initiative is also being conducted in partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

***Identifying Child Predators:***

- **Creating a National Child Victim Identification System** – In an unprecedented partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, ICE, the FBI, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. Secret Service and the Department of Justice are developing the National Child Victim Identification Card Program. Together with its partners in this important effort, ICE's CyberSmuggling Center is hosting the nation's only comprehensive, searchable system for identifying digital child pornography images. With its capacity to search and identify known images, the system is designed to help law enforcement agencies throughout the world identify and rescue children featured in the images. The system is also designed to facilitate prosecution of those who possess or distribute digital child pornography images in the wake of a 2002 Supreme Court decision (*Ashcroft v. Free Speech Coalition*) requiring proof that such images depict an actual child. Because the effort leverages a comprehensive partnership with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, this system will eventually contain all known child pornography images on the Internet. Already, the ICE CyberSmuggling Center has been able to positively identify children featured in roughly 300 images and has provided this information to six different law enforcement agencies nationwide for prosecutorial purposes.
- **Enhancing Partnerships** – ICE, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the FBI have a long-standing partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), particularly with its efforts to identify victims of child pornography. ICE is expanding this partnership by assigning a full-time

ICE criminal investigator to work at NCMEC, and by using the new capabilities of *Operation Predator* to help NCMEC rescue missing and exploited children worldwide. ICE agents will also work closely with other programs in the Department of Justice and other federal agencies, in particular the FBI's "Innocent Images" program, to bring to bear the full force of the federal government against child predators.

- **Using a Single Web Portal to Access All Publicly Available State Megan's Law Databases-**

In an effort to make state sex offender registry information more widely available to the public, ICE has joined the ranks of other federal agencies in making links to all state sex offender registries available on our website.

- **Coordination with the NCIC Registered Sex Offender Database** - ICE has obtained from the FBI the National Criminal Information Center (NCIC) registry of sex offenders from all 50 states (approximately 300,000 names) and is querying this list against all indices available to ICE. The objective of this process is to identify those subjects who are linked to investigations of interest to *Operation Predator*, ICE and its partnership agencies, or who are subject to deportation proceedings. Operation protocol for updated NCIC information and queries will be established on a monthly basis.
- **Creation of an ICE Toll-Free Reporting Number:** ICE created a toll-free telephone number for the public to report information about child sex offenders and others who put children at risk. The toll-free number, 1-866-DHS-BICE, is monitored 24 hours a day by the Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC), which funnels leads to the appropriate ICE component(s) in a timely manner.

#### ***Enhancing Investigative Capabilities:***

- **Forming a New, Multi-Agency Unit at the ICE Cyber Smuggling Center** – To oversee and coordinate *Operation Predator* at the national level, ICE formed a new unit at its Cyber Smuggling Center. This unit is comprised of various ICE representatives, as well as investigators from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and other federal agencies.
- **Appointment of *Operation Predator* Coordinator**—ICE has appointed an operational coordinator who will report to the Deputy Executive Director of Investigative Services. This new position will be responsible for coordinating *Operation Predator* activity among ICE law enforcement components and other federal, state, and local agencies.
- **Harnessing New Intelligence Capabilities to Target Sexual Predators** – The ICE Intelligence Division, as a result of the merger of the former INS and Customs Intelligence units and their respective databases, utilizes the combined information available from these systems to identify and locate major sex violators, criminal fugitives and alien absconders with child sex histories. At the same time, the ICE Cyber Smuggling Center is gathering information from the National Center for

Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), state Megan's Law lists, and other sources. All these leads are being fed to ICE field agents and fugitive operations teams for action.

- **Prioritizing Investigations Involving Child Exploitation** – ICE's Investigations Division has begun prioritizing its ongoing investigations involving child sex crimes, as well as alien and human smuggling cases in which children are placed at risk. ICE agents have also prioritized efforts to locate those who have been charged with sexual offenses, but remain at large.

#### ***Prioritizing Removal Actions:***

- **Targeting Fugitive Criminal Aliens with Sex Offense Histories for Removal** – In addition to their homeland security responsibilities, ICE's Detention and Removal Division has been prioritizing for removal those criminal aliens with a history of sex offenses. These are foreign nationals who have been convicted of sex offenses, served their sentences, but have subsequently evaded law enforcement efforts to remove them from the country. Upon apprehension, these individuals will be held without bond. To help track down these criminal aliens, ICE has posted a "Most Wanted" Criminal Aliens List on its website at <http://www.ice.gov>, enabling the public to see photographs of wanted individuals and to call in tips. ICE has created a toll free tip line, 1-866-DHS-2ICE, that is staffed seven days a week, 24 hours per day, to receive information from the public.
- **Identifying Alien Sex Offender Inmates Before Release from Prison** -- ICE's Institutional Removal Program, which identifies alien inmates at prisons who are subject to removal from the country upon completion of their sentences, will ensure that alien sex offender inmates are identified prior to release from prison and removed from the country upon their release. ICE will be partnering with governors around the country to help state and local prisons identify and place detainers on alien sex offender inmates before their release from prison. ICE's Law Enforcement Support Center in Burlington, Vermont, will play a vital role in this effort.

#### ***Working With Foreign Governments:***

- **Deportation Notifications** – ICE is notifying foreign governments of any aliens with a history of sexual offense being deported to their countries. ICE is also seeking information from foreign governments on anyone with a history of sexual offenses seeking entry into the United States.
- **Partnering in Investigations** – ICE will work closely with foreign law enforcement partners in conducting both covert and overt child pornography and child sex tourism investigations in the United States and around the globe.

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**The ICE CyberSmuggling Center**

Every crime that can be committed in the “real” world can be committed or facilitated using computers and the Internet. From child pornography to arms and drug trafficking, the criminal underworld has embraced this medium of commerce and communication.

The CyberSmuggling Center in Fairfax, Virginia, is recognized nationally and internationally as a leader in the investigation of international criminal activities conducted on or facilitated by the Internet. Created in 1997, the center brings the full range of ICE computer and forensic assets together in a single location to combat such Internet-related crimes as:

- Possession, manufacture and distribution of child pornography
- International money laundering and illegal cyber-banking
- Illegal arms trafficking and illegal export of strategic/controlled commodities
- Drug trafficking (including prohibited pharmaceuticals)
- Trafficking in stolen art and antiquities
- Intellectual property rights violations (including music and software)

The CyberSmuggling Center essentially serves as “mission control” for ICE’s Internet related investigations. The center develops leads generated by domestic and international sources; validates if those leads constitute violations of law, then turns over these leads to ICE field offices for further investigation.

The Center has also provided hundreds of leads to foreign law enforcement agencies. Another important component of the center is training. The Center provides cyber crime training to federal, state, local and international law enforcement agencies.

The CyberSmuggling Center is divided into three primary sections: child exploitation, computer forensics, and cyber crimes.

**Child Exploitation Section:** The child exploitation section focuses on child pornography and child sex tourism violations occurring over the Internet through the use of the World Wide Web, newsgroups, Internet Relay Chat Channels, and other technologies. Over the years, the CyberSmuggling Center has achieved great success in identifying and apprehending Internet child pornographers. Recent investigative successes include:

- Operation Hamlet -- a joint investigation by ICE and the Danish National Police into a ring of pedophiles that molested their own children and posted images of this molestation on the Internet. Launched in 2001, this case has to date resulted in the arrest of 34 individuals and the rescue of more than 100 children subjected to this torturous environment. The majority of these children were U.S. citizens.



- Operation Mango -- an extensive investigation that closed down an American-owned beachside resort in Acapulco, Mexico that catered to child sex predators. The resort was a haven for pedophiles that traveled to the facility for the sole purpose of engaging in sex with minors. As a result of this investigation and others, the government of Mexico recently created a federal task force to address crimes against children in its country.

**Computer Forensics Section:** The CyberSmuggling Center features a fully-equipped Computer Forensics Laboratory that provides specialized digital evidence recovery services for ICE field offices. Upon request, the lab also provides these serves to other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

The computer forensics section also boasts a team of computer investigative specialists who are trained to perform forensic examinations of seized digital storage devices, such as computer hard drives, digital video devices, floppy disks, back-up tapes, and other external storage medial. These specialists assist ICE field agents in the preparation of search warrants targeting digital evidence and provide expert computer testimony.

**Cyber Crimes Section:** This section focuses on an array of Internet-related crimes that are not connected to child pornography. This section investigates the use of the Internet to further criminal activities such as intellectual property rights violations, money laundering, narcotics trafficking, fraud, stolen cultural property (including missing Iraqi artifacts), and arms trafficking/illegal exports.

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## **A SNAPSHOT OF RECENT ICE ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS TO PROTECT CHILDREN**

- **7<sup>th</sup>-Grade Teacher Arrested for Child Pornography Possession** – On September 24, ICE agents in Fresno, California, arrested Victor Lang, a seventh grade school teacher, after executing a search warrant on his residence. ICE agents found digital child pornography images of 12-year olds. Lang had been teaching at this Fresno school for 13 years.
- **Man Charged as Child Sex Tourist, Admits Molesting 40 to 50 Minors** - On September 24, Michael Lewis Clark was charged with federal child sex tourism violations in Seattle. He is the first in the nation to be charged under the enhanced child sex tourism provisions of the PROTECT Act, which was enacted in April 2003. Lewis was arrested by ICE agents on September 10 after he arrived in Seattle on a flight from Asia. In June 2003, Clark had been arrested by authorities in Cambodia for sexual debauchery involving two Cambodian boys, ages 10 and 13. Clark was expelled by the Cambodian government and sent to the United States. According to the criminal complaint, Clark has admitted molesting as many as 40-50 children.
- **Teen Hostage Rescued, Smugglers Arrested** – On September 18, ICE agents in Houston learned that a 16-year-old undocumented Mexican boy who had been smuggled into the country was being held captive by smugglers pending payment of a ransom fee by his family. Undercover ICE agents, posing as members of the boy's family, met the two smugglers and arrested them after a chase involving an ICE helicopter and ground assets. The teen was rescued by ICE agents.
- **Megan's Law Registrant Arrested Again for Child Sex Crimes** – On September 17, ICE agents in California arrested an individual on charges of child pornography possession, following the execution of a search warrant on his home. This individual had previously been convicted of lewd and lascivious conduct with a person under the age of 14, which required him to be registered as a sex offender under Megan's Law.
- **Teen Prostitution Trafficker Sentenced** -- On September 16, a federal judge in Newark sentenced Rafael Ruiz, a Dominican national, to 44 months imprisonment for conspiracy to commit sex trafficking. Ruiz, who operated a house of prostitution in Plainfield, N.J., was involved in a ring that smuggled female juveniles from Mexico into the United States and then held them to work as prostitutes against their will. ICE agents closed down the trafficking ring.
- **Man Who Molested Own Daughter Arrested** --On September 16, ICE agents in West Palm, Florida arrested Fritz Laguerre based on an outstanding deportation order. Laguerre, a citizen of Haiti, had been arrested by the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office in July 2002 for raping his 12-year-old daughter. He later pleaded guilty to fondling. Laguerre had subsequently evaded ICE efforts to deport him.

- **Accused Child Rapist Arrested** -- On September 13, ICE officers arrested Ramon Amador, 53, a man wanted in Minnesota on charges of raping a 9-year-old, after he attempted to apply for U.S. immigration benefits in California. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) officers conducted a background check of Amador when he first applied for benefits. The check revealed that Amador was a wanted fugitive. CIS officers notified ICE officials and invited Amador to come to the Sacramento CIS office to provide more information. Amador was arrested by ICE agents upon his arrival at the office.
- **13 Child Predators Arrested, Including Man Who Sexually Assaulted Mentally-Impaired Minor** -- On September 13, ICE agents in Denver announced the arrest of 13 aliens who had been convicted of sexual offenses against minors, but had subsequently evaded deportation. Among those arrested was Pedro Gutierrez-Lozano, a Mexican national convicted in 1999 of 2<sup>nd</sup> degree sexual assault on a mentally impaired minor. Gutierrez was deported to Mexico in 2000 after serving his 180-day jail sentence. He returned to the United States illegally and began living in Colorado until his arrest by ICE agents.
- **International Child Pornographer Sentenced** -- On August 27, a federal judge in Salt Lake City sentenced Joseph Paul Durborow, 41, to 121-months imprisonment for his role in an international child pornography ring that molested its own children and posted images of the molestation on the Internet. ICE agents arrested Durborow as part of an international investigation called Operation Hamlet. A child photographer in Utah, Durborow pleaded guilty in 2002 to using hidden cameras in his studio's dressing room to photograph children as they changed clothes. Durborow admitted taking explicit photos of his own foster daughter and then selling or trading these images to others.
- **50 Child Predators Arrested, Including Summer Camp Employee Who Molested 3 Young Sisters** -- On August 13, ICE agents in Baltimore announced the arrest of 50 aliens who had been convicted of sexual offenses involving minors, but had evaded deportation. Among those arrested were a summer camp employee convicted of molesting three pre-pubescent sisters, as well as a Polish national and former U.S. Marine convicted of indecent exposure.
- **Accused Child Rapist With AIDS Arrested After Predator Hotline Tip** -- On August 7, the ICE Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC) received a call on the Operation Predator tip line indicating that Francis Wanjuri, a 27-year-old Kenyan national who reportedly was afflicted with AIDS, was having sex with female minors in the Boston area. The ICE LESC immediately provided the information to police in Lawrence, Massachusetts. The following day, police in Lawrence arrested Wanjuri on charges of raping a 14-year-old girl in a local apartment.
- **International Teen Sex Traffickers Sentenced** -- On August 7, a federal judge in Newark sentenced two female Mexican nationals to 210 months imprisonment for luring four teenaged Mexican girls to the United States and holding them captive as prostitutes in a brothel in Plainfield, N.J. These sentences were among the first to be handed down

under the Trafficking and Victims Protection Act, which was enacted in 2000. The two women were among a total of six defendants who have pleaded guilty as a result of an ICE probe into a ring that conspired to smuggled undocumented Mexican girls into the United States.

- **Accused Child Pornographer / Elementary School Teacher Arrested --** On July 25, ICE agents arrested Ronald Knapp, an elementary school teacher and a mentor in the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program in Union City, Michigan. ICE agents were acting on a lead from an overseas child pornography website that identified Knapp as a paid subscriber to the site. Agents arrested Knapp after executing a search warrant at his home where they identified thousands of child pornography images on his computer.
- **27 Child Predators Arrested, Including a Man Filmed Groping a 12-Year-Old Girl -** On July 24, ICE agents in Miami arrested 25 men convicted of sexually abusing children and 2 women convicted of child abuse or endangerment. As part of the operation, ICE agents had targeted for arrest Bayardo Rafael Chamarro, a Nicaraguan national who was a registered sex offender and who had evaded law enforcement efforts to deport him. As the ICE team prepared to arrest him, Chamarro was caught on a surveillance camera groping a 12-year-old girl in a Sears department store in Miami. Local police arrested Chamarro outside the store. He was subsequently charged with lewd and lascivious molestation on a child under the age of 16. Chamarro had been charged previously with similar crimes against minors and was a registered sex offender under Megan's Law.
- **Man Sentenced For Using Internet to Lure Teen Girls into Sex --** On July 21, a federal judge in Portland, Maine, sentenced Charles A. Gravenhorst, 46, to eight years in prison for using his computer to lure a 14-year-old and three 15-year-olds to engage in prohibited sex acts with him and for transferring obscene materials over the Internet to three minors. Gravenhorst was found guilty in March 2003 after a jury trial that resulted from an extensive ICE investigation.
- **Man Who Used Niece in Child Pornography Scheme Sentenced --** On July 16, a federal judge in Hartford, Connecticut sentenced James Petrucci to 10 years in prison and two years supervised release for production of child pornography. An ICE investigation had determined that Petrucci had used his niece, a 12-year-old girl, to pose in a sexually explicit manner while he photographed her.
- **Prolific Internet Child Pornographer Pleads Guilty --** On July 11, Martin James Finer, 58, pled guilty in Hawaii to charges of possession of more than 58,000 child pornography images on his computer and more than 3,000 movie files of child pornography. ICE agents arrested Finer in June 2002 after a lengthy investigation.
- **Child Sex Predator Arrested --** On July 10, ICE agents in Minnesota arrested Humberto Gabriel Zamora, a Mexican national who was living under an alias in Willmar, Minn. Gabriel Zamora had been convicted of first degree sexual abuse involving a 15-year old girl in March 2001. He was deported to Mexico in April 2001. He subsequently re-

entered the country illegally and moved to Willmar, where he began working under another name.